

Facebook

Twitter (/#twitter)

Google+

(/#google_plus)

Email (/#email)

LinkedIn

(/#linkedin)

With 'Moon Over Lake Oswego,' artist considers idea of time

Sam Stites Thursday, May 30, 2019

Dave Haslett's Gallery Without Walls piece challenges viewers to think back millions of years



PMG PHOTO: SAM STITES - Dave Haslett plays around with configurations of a sculpture he's working on in his studio.

<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003641984966-0692.jpg>The moon sits high above Lake Oswego on a chilly spring evening. As the clouds move, they reveal its luminescence which is reflected off all the bodies of water — lake and rivers — throughout the city.

That iridescent glow of the water's prizm effect reflects the trees, rocks and soil that represent the earth and tie together a picture of all that represents the relationship between the moon and the earth. Push and pull. The violent force of our oceans' tides, as well as their serene beauty.

The moon has long been the artist's muse, a timeless representation of our fascination with things that seem too big to comprehend. With how we, as humans on this earth, fit into the greater picture of the universe.

For artist Dave Haslett, the moon represents many things, but time is what he wants viewers of his latest piece for Lake Oswego's Gallery Without Walls to think about.

Haslett is a student of geology, and when you speak in geological terms you think in the realm of hundreds of millions to even billions of years. As a stone sculptor, one of Haslett's favorite materials to work with is basalt, which is what he chose to use in his latest sculpture, "Moon Over Lake Oswego," which will be unveiled in a public ceremony on Thursday, June 6 at 3:30 p.m., 5285 Kruse Way. The sculpture was a gift to the Arts Council of Lake Oswego from Ed and Joann Frankel.

"I'm into time... why are we here? Why are the dinosaurs gone? What is our perception of time?" Haslett said. "I like to incorporate a lot of that to make viewers think."

Haslett tends to use a lot of materials that can be found right here in the Pacific Northwest, basalt being one of them. He likes to make sure he finds people harvesting materials the right way, meaning they're being precise about how they remove them — not just coming in and blasting everything to hell. The Pacific Northwest is actually the third largest basalt deposit in the world, and the specific basalt Haslett used on this project was sourced from Central Washington.

To him, basalt represents the geologic activity that took place up and down the west coast, particularly the Cascadia subduction zone and the results of cataclysmic events like the Missoula Floods to create this lush environment we call home.

"Basalt is raw energy, it's hot and it flowed as liquid. This is all 12-14 million-year-old rock, which is new in geological time," Haslett said. "I want people to think about when it was formed, about when it's from. That's part of what the attraction is; plus, it's bloody hard."



PMG PHOTO: SAM STITES - Dave Haslett polishes a piece of basalt he's working on as part of a commission for the City of Everett at his studio near Estacada.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003641984923-0692.jpg>)

It's somewhat fitting Haslett sticks to local materials — although he does have some pretty rare Australian marble he'd love to show you — because he himself is northwest to the core.

Born in Coos Bay, Haslett grew up on the Oregon coast and has lived in Eugene and Longview, Washington. He spent the past 20 years splitting life between his studio in an 1880s farmhouse on his parents' property on Orcas Island, Washington, and his home in West Linn he shares with his partner Jan Rimerman.

Last year Haslett's parents decided to sell their property, prompting him to move his studio closer to his home in West Linn. He was able to secure a deal to use an old barn on a beautiful piece of property owned by some family on the outskirts of Estacada.

Despite the delay in moving, Haslett was able to complete "Moon Over Lake Oswego" and install it at its permanent home along Kruse Way in late April.

The idea for the piece came back in December of 2017 when the Frankel family — longtime supporters of the arts in Lake Oswego — came to the ACLO and said they'd like to donate a piece to the Gallery Without Walls.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003642148400-0888.jpg>)

The Frankels knew they wanted it to be by Haslett, but they challenged him to do something different than his work to date.

Haslett went to the drawing board, and for three months he brainstormed ideas until he came up with "Moon Over Lake Oswego."

Haslett's design incorporates two basalt columns weighing in at 2,000 pounds each. The next three months of the process were spent working with Seattle Solstice stonecutters Jason Clauson and Stuart Kendall as they roughed out the two basalt columns on their computerized wire saw. Between standing the stones and measuring the best lines to cut for proportion and scale, Haslett drew on the stones for Clauson to transfer into the computer for review. Once they agreed on the results, they cut them into shape. Each cut took 14 hours to complete.

The polishing of the sawn basalt surfaces was a seven-step process, according to Haslett, which he repeated three times. After going through seven grits of diamond sanders, he started all over again to get the funhouse mirror effect he was going for. (<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003641984941-0692.jpg>)

"The high polish and reflections relate to the prism effect when looking through water," Haslett said. "The natural rind was treated with the antiquing brush system, which also was repeated several times to get the water texture and represent the many facets of wind textures on water. The whole theme is water related and the basalt columns represent the wave. The finished height is just under 14-feet-tall and weighs 5,000 pounds."

Finally, Haslett brought in local calligrapher Holly Monroe to help him apply the gold leaf on the top piece of the sculpture. Monroe supplied copious amounts of data to Haslett regarding proper outdoor application of gold leaf including humidity, temperature and tack on the adhesive — all of which has to be under perfect conditions to set properly.

"I would like to thank Holly Monroe for all of her expertise," he said. "The tack on the adhesive takes a minimum of 12 hours to set with no wind, as the leaf foil is thinner than paper so even your breathing becomes a factor."



PMG PHOTO: SAM STITES - A series of projects Haslett is working on sitting on a table in his workshop waiting to be finished.



PMG PHOTO: SAM STITES - The polishing process to gain the funhouse mirror effect Haslett is going for takes seven steps at varying degrees of diamond grit.

While Haslett has been in the rotating Gallery Without Walls in the past, he's particularly excited about "Moon Over Lake Oswego" to become a part of the permanent collection. Because of its permanence, he wanted this piece to be something that would stand the test of time.

"I am truly blessed and thankful the Frankels stepped up with idea to have my sculpture permanently displayed in the City of Lake Oswego," Haslett said.



PMG PHOTO: SAM STITES - Haslett (front left) guides one of the 2,000-pound basalt columns onto cushions while installing it along Kruse Way in April.

(<https://pamplinmedia.com/images/artimg/00003641984986-0692.jpg>)

According to Haslett, one of the hardest part of any artist's job is knowing when to quit. It's something he had to learn the hard way, but he's learned to take Buddhist tenet of letting go and moving onto heart. It's important he compartmentalize his work because at any given time he will have several projects going at once. He's currently finishing a commissioned piece for the City of Everett, Washington.

"Sometimes you've just got to walk away, come back in the morning, see what you've got. It's when you're tired and you push yourself too far, that's when you start making mistakes," he said.

Contact Lake Oswego Review reporter Sam Stites at 503-479-2375 or [sstites@pamplinmedia.com](mailto:ssites@pamplinmedia.com) (<mailto:ssites@pamplinmedia.com>).

IF YOU GO

WHAT: Unveiling event for "Moon Over Lake Oswego"

WHEN: Thursday, June 6 at 3:30 p.m.

WHERE: 5285 Kruse Way, Lake Oswego

WHO: Hosted by the Arts Council of Lake Oswego